

Have a Great Summer!

From Neil Hamada, Dunes Manager

May brings the end to another Dunes season. I hope yours was a safe one! As usual, the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA) has had our fair share of challenges. On the other hand, we have also had our fair share of successes. Here are a few topics from the past season you can discuss with your friends over the summer.

- BLM announced the intent to write a new management plan for the dunes,
- A Border Patrol agent was killed in the Buttercup area by an alleged drug smuggler,
- The Border Patrol announced a no tolerance policy on border crossing in the dunes,
- There will be an adjustment to the cost of the dunes permits, they will stay the same if purchased off-site, but cost more in the dunes,
- Visitation is down by 7%
- The BLM constructed a new ranger station in the Buttercup area (mostly funded through non-fee dollars) and it will have a medical room for visitors open next season,
- SB742 passed and we hope the changes will bring more of your Green Sticker Dollars to the Dunes,
- So far, we have responded to 560 requests for medical assistance, which is down 18%, but there were still 13 fatalities associated with OHV activities in the Dunes,
- The Competition Hill curfew remains in place,
- The 49,617 acre administrative closure remains in place while BLM writes a new plan,
- Critical habitat for Peirson's milk-vetch has been finalized,
- The BLM has begun our insect and Peirson's milk-vetch pollinator study,
- A new partnership has formed to assist the BLM with emergency medical service dunes called Kris "Chili Dog" Frick Foundation and El Centro Regional Medical Center, Pioneer Memorial Hospital, Gold Cross Ambulance Service, United Desert Gateway, and GlamisWeather.com have joined forces to improve services.
- The L.A. Sanitation waste facility will open next season, northeast of Glamis,
- The All American Canal Lining Project is well under way which temporarily impacts OHV access over the Herman Schneider Memorial Bridge,
- The construction of a new canal will begin soon in the Gordons Well area,
- Coachella Valley Water District closed access on their canal roads,
- BLM announced our intent to request a proposal to contract fee collection next season,
- Dune clean ups continue to be successful partnership projects each month,
- The Dunes fee program is barely funding operations and may be in the red this year,
- BLM continues to work closely with the UDG on outreach and visitor data collection studies, and
- The ASA and the ISDRA Technical Review Team continue to work closely with the BLM, on all levels, on issues in the dunes.

These are a few of the issues the Dunes staff has been working on over the season. I would like to say thanks to all the friendly visitors who helped out the staff over the season. You know who you are, you helped us at that accident scene, you helped at the clean ups, you told your buddy not to leave those nails in the fire pit, etc....you did the right thing. You're helping us keep your recreation lands open, safe, and clean.

I'd also like to say thanks to the BLM staff. Many used to ride and recreate before we got this job. These amazing folks on the Dunes Rescue Team who provide Emergency Medical Services, in addition to the rest of their other job duties, are: Volunteers Pat and Jerry Vine, and Rusty Massie, our Seasonal Park Rangers Jordan Downs, Robert Swain, Karissa Blevins, Paul Nilson, Harmonie Daigle, Jeremy Nguyen, Jose Barba, Nicholas Ihori, Ray Murillo, Interpretive Park Ranger Joya Szalwinski, Park Rangers George Masner and Ernesto Tanori, Outdoor Recreation Planner Marisa Williams, Wilderness Specialist John Johnson, Information Technologist Valerie Kastoll, Environmental Coordinator Erin Dreyfuss, and our leader / supervisor Ms. Jamie Neilans. These are the folks making a difference on the sand, day in and day out.

Visit our website to keep up to date over the dog days of summer. You won't believe our web address, it's www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra.html

I hope to see you next season; be safe over the summer.